

Information to help you following the loss of your baby



*'There is no Footprint
Too small that it
Cannot leave an imprint
On this world'*

We wish to express our sincere sympathy to you, your family
and friends during this very sad time.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you are unclear about
any matter, our staff will always be pleased to help.

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Introduction

The loss of your baby, whether during pregnancy, labour, or after birth, is a time of great anxiety and distress for you, your partner, other children, your family and friends.

Even at the most difficult times there are certain things that have to be dealt with and we aim to provide support and advise you with some of the practical and official decisions that you will need to make.

Staff within the clinical area will inform you of the clinical process to follow.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with important information and advice you may need for the more practical elements ie. Registration of the birth / stillbirth / death, and making funeral arrangements, without feeling too overwhelmed.

It is our aim to fulfill spiritual and cultural needs, as well as support parents and families to make as many memories as possible of those precious moments shared with their baby.

Taking time to think about what you want for your baby is important – go at your own pace.

Grief

Everybody reacts in different ways to losing a baby. Apart from differences in personality, there are a variety of circumstances, cultures and beliefs, which will influence the way you react to grief.

It is likely that you will feel numbed, angry and emotionally confused. Although difficult to understand, these emotions are quite normal.

Grieving varies greatly from person to person and there are no set time limits dictating how long the pain will last.

You may find it hard to take in what has happened, to understand why it has happened and to remember what people are saying.

Many bereaved parents have physical reactions to grief. You may have palpitations, chest pains, a lump in your throat or butterflies in your stomach. You may not feel like eating and you may feel exhausted but struggle to sleep. You may be physically as well as emotionally drained.

All of these reactions are common and normal when you experience the loss of a baby.

After Baby is Born.....

Once your baby has been born it is your choice as to whether you / your partner wish to see your baby and /or hold them either straight away or wait for a while.

This may be a difficult decision for you. Many parents may feel anxious about seeing their baby and others may be more comfortable with this. Again everyone is different and it is important that you do not feel pressurised to make an immediate decision. Staff are available to help and advise you as to what your baby looks like.

Even when decisions were made earlier these can be changed as once baby is with you, you may feel differently about the original choices you made.

Once the birth is complete you and your partner can be left to spend private time together as a family and to start creating your memories.

We have a 'cuddle cot' which can be set up in your room and this helps us to keep your baby at a cool temperature. The cuddle cot does not prevent the deterioration process, it just slows it down to enable you to spend as much time as you wish with your baby.

Creating Memories

Some parents are pleased to have mementos of their baby. The midwife/nurse caring for you will be aware of your distress and can support you with creating these memories.

Some parents however do not want physical memories relating to their baby and the midwife/nurse caring for you will understand your wishes.

Mementos may include photographs, ink handprints and footprints, identification bracelet and/or a lock of hair. These can be taken and kept within your maternity case notes if you prefer not to take them with you immediately.

The midwife or nurse caring for you will suggest taking photographs of your baby if possible, although photographs are never taken without parental consent. We will offer to take photographs for you, or you may wish to take your own photographs of your baby.

In addition to this you may be offered a special memento box which has other additional ideas for you to create further memories of your baby if you wish. These memory boxes are donated by our other bereaved parents and families.

You do not have to take any or all mementos if you wish that are offered to you.

*'I decided that it would be better to have a photograph
that I may never look at,
than want a photograph that I could never have'*

(Anon. Dad).

Dressing your Baby

If you feel it appropriate you can bathe and dress your baby.

If you would like to, you can bring in clothes or blankets.

You can also bring in a toy, or other special objects (perhaps a letter, family photos, drawings from brothers or sisters etc.) which will stay with the baby and can be placed in the coffin.

Naming or Blessing for your Baby

Naming or blessing can be very important. Choosing a name is one way of doing something positive for your baby. It helps to give focus and identity to thoughts and feelings about your baby.

It may not be possible to tell the sex of very tiny babies, but you may want to choose a name suitable for either sex.

Some people find it helpful to have a brief ceremony for naming or blessing their baby.

You may like to ask someone to do this with you. The Hospital Chaplaincy can support you in this.

If you would like us to arrange a naming or blessing service for your baby, the midwife or nurse will contact the Chaplaincy department or another appropriate person.

Registration of Birth / Stillbirth / Death

In England and Wales all births, stillbirths and deaths have to be registered by the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

Registration must be completed before your baby can be buried or cremated if he/she was born alive and then died or was stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

There is no legal requirement to register your baby if he/she was not born alive before the 24th week of pregnancy. However, if you would like we can provide you with a SANDs 'Certificate of birth before the 24th week of pregnancy' as a keepsake to commemorate the birth of your baby.

Registering a Stillbirth

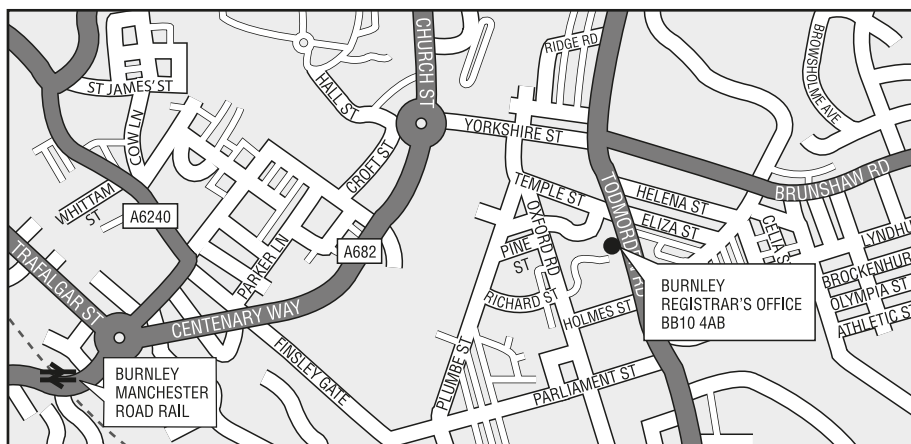
The midwife or doctor who attended the birth of your baby will complete a Medical Certificate of Stillbirth, which the midwife will give to you as soon as it is available. You must take the certificate to the Registrar of Births and Deaths within 42 days of your baby's birth, and an appointment will be arranged for you by the midwives.

Stillbirths and Deaths can only be registered with the Local Authority in which the stillbirth or death occurred.

The majority of stillbirths / deaths occurring within Lancashire Women and Newborn Centre are registered by the Registrars at:

Burnley Registry Office
Lyndhurst House
Todmorden Road
Burnley
Lancashire
BB10 4AB

Telephone Number:
0300 123 6705



A 'Registration by Declaration' can be made at other offices – however, the official paperwork will then be issued by the registrar within the local authority in which the stillbirth / death occurred and forwarded to yourself via post.

The Registrar will ask for:

1. The mother's name, occupation, date and place of birth, and any other names that the mother might have used, including maiden name if applicable.
2. The father's name, occupation, date and place of birth, and any other names that the father may have used.
3. The date of your baby's birth.

The Registrar will enter your baby's name in a stillbirth register. You can have your baby's first name(s) entered if you wish, as well as the surname, so you may want to give some thought to names for your baby before registering.

The Registrar will give you a white certificate after registration (a Certificate for Burial or Cremation). This is free of charge. It is needed before a funeral can take place and you should give it to your funeral director.

The mother or father may register their stillborn baby or baby's birth alone when they are married to each other.

Parents who are not married to each other have to see the Registrar together if they want to have the father's name entered in the birth or stillbirth register.

A full Stillbirth Certificate is available to parents at the time of registration, showing the parent's details as well as the baby's details. There is a fee of £4.00 for the full certificate.

Registering a Neonatal Death

For babies who die after birth, even if they only live for a very short time, both the birth and death must be registered.

In order that you can register the death, the doctor who looked after your baby will give you a Medical Certificate of Death. You must take this to the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

The birth/death may be declared at any register office, but can delay the funeral arrangements as the completed paperwork is then sent to the town of birth.

The Registrar will ask for:

1. The mother's name and occupation.
2. The father's name and occupation.
3. The date of your baby's birth.
4. Your baby's name.
5. The date of your baby's death (shown on the Medical Certificate of Death).

When registering the death, the Registrar will record your baby's first name(s) as well as the surname, so you may want to give some thought to names for your baby before registering.

The Registrar will give you a green certificate after the registration (a Certificate for Burial or Cremation). This is free of charge. It is needed before a funeral can take place and you should give it to your funeral director.

Registration in Coroner's Cases

In a few cases, the Coroner's office is informed of a baby's death because the doctor is unable to issue a death certificate.

It may be that the doctors do not know the cause of your baby's death and so cannot issue a Death Certificate, or more information is needed to confirm the cause of death. In these circumstances the doctor is legally responsible and will have to report the death to the coroner for advice.

If the coroner decides a Post Mortem is necessary it can be done without your consent.

The Registrar may also inform the coroner to seek advice if the cause of death entered on the certificate is not clear, but this happens rarely.

You will be informed at the hospital, by the doctor, nurse or midwife, if the coroner is to be involved.

In the event of an Inquest taking place, the Coroner's Office will issue an Interim Certificate to enable the funeral to be undertaken, as a cause of death will not be issued until the end of the Inquest.

Special Registration for Urgent Burial

Some parents, for religious or cultural reasons, may want to have their baby buried as quickly as possible.

If the death occurs near a bank holiday or a weekend the local registrar will be able to issue a Certificate of Burial to allow this to go ahead, provided the death is not reportable to the Coroner and the baby is not to be cremated.

Post Mortem Examination

It may be recommended that a Post Mortem examination be carried out on your baby. This is an examination of the baby's body and internal organs in close detail, to try to understand more clearly what happened.

It can be very difficult and distressing to think of such an examination, but sometimes a Post Mortem is the only way to provide information which may help you to understand what (if anything) caused your baby to die. Post Mortem examination is helpful to confirm antenatal diagnosis such as abnormalities seen on scans, and also for planning future pregnancies.

You will be given a Sands booklet 'Deciding on Post Mortem examination information for parents'. This booklet contains a lot of helpful information and will assist you when making your decision.

By doing a Post Mortem examination, important information can be gained which can help you in the future if you wish to have another baby, or help other couples who have similar problems.

Some parents are certain from the beginning that they want a Post Mortem, others may not be sure. It is your decision (except in a Coroner's case).

Your consent is required for Post Mortem and the doctor / nurse / midwife will go through the paperwork with you before you sign the form. A copy of the paperwork you signed will be given to you for your records and once you have made the decision for the examination you will agree a 'cooling off' period (usually 24 hours) in which you can change your mind.

If the coroner decides a Post Mortem is necessary it can be done without your consent.

Where will the Post Mortem be carried out?

If this is a coroner's Post Mortem it is usually carried out at the coroner's mortuary by a pathologist of his choice, but your baby will be brought back to the hospital or taken by your funeral director to their Chapel of Rest.

If you have given your written consent, the examination will be carried out at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust by a Pathologist who specialises in the examination of babies.

Your baby will be transferred to Manchester by the hospital funeral director. The Post Mortems are undertaken during weekdays (Monday – Friday) and usually completed within a week.

The hospital funeral director will then collect your baby once the procedure is complete and return them to the hospital mortuary at Royal Blackburn Hospital where they can then be collected by your chosen funeral director.

The examination will be carried out with care in a sensitive manner. In most cases you will be able to see and hold your baby again after the Post Mortem.

How long will I wait for the results and how will I receive them?

You can wait up to 12 weeks for the results and you will receive them when you have your follow up appointment with the Consultant at the hospital.

The secretary will send this appointment to you once all the results are back. This will enable you to ask any questions and make any plans for future pregnancies.

Your Consultant can be contacted by speaking to the obstetric secretaries via the main Burnley General Hospital switch telephone number.

Arranging the Funeral

Your baby's funeral can be a way of moving on a little, or perhaps marking the end of the first stage of grieving. For others in your family it can be a way of acknowledging your baby's death as well as their own grief. It is important you take your time and choose what is right for you and your family.

The hospital staff and local funeral directors will be able to offer you the information, support and guidance that you will need to help make your choices.

Babies born before 24 weeks

All parents of any baby born before 24 weeks gestation that has not shown any signs of life after being born have the option of either a hospital or private funeral.

Some parents choose not to have any involvement with what happens to their baby and prefer for the hospital to arrange a respectful and sensitive cremation. Parents also have the choice of a hospital burial.

Hospital funerals are undertaken at the end of each month either at Burnley Cemetery or Pleasington Cemetery in Blackburn, dependent upon the area in which the parents live.

Cremations - Babies are cremated together and any ashes recovered are scattered on the gardens within the cemetery.

Burials – All hospital burials are undertaken at Burnley Cemetery. Babies are buried within a shared grave. This area is not marked, and is simply grassed over. The cemetery will not permit any headstones or plaques on a shared grave.

However the cemetery will permit flowers to be laid should parents wish to do so. The cemetery will provide details of when the burial is to be undertaken if parents wish to be present.

If you decide to leave arrangements to the hospital the cemetery officers will keep information about where your baby was buried, or ashes scattered. There is no service for parents to attend at the time of hospital cremation / burial.

Parents also have the option of making arrangements privately through a funeral director.

Babies born over 24 weeks gestation, or with signs of life

By law, all live-born or stillborn babies born after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or any live-born whom then dies regardless of gestation, must have a formal funeral.

Parents of any baby that is live-born or stillborn after 24 weeks gestation are legally responsible for ensuring that the body is buried or cremated. Parents are required to make their own arrangements for a private funeral. This may be done through a funeral director of your choice, or you also have the option of burying him/her yourself on private land, without the help of a funeral director.

Regarding the funeral directors, the basic costs are usually covered but depending on your wishes there may be an additional cost.

Your undertaker however will be able to advise you about the charges made by the cemetery for the cremation, or the grave if parents wish to have a burial.

The funeral ceremony can be very personal and may be important for religious and spiritual reasons however it can also be non-religious.

You may choose who you would like to conduct the service, whether it is a religious leader a Civil Funeral Celebrant or relative or friend. Your funeral director will discuss this with you.

If you are receiving income support you may be able to get help from the social fund towards funeral costs. Your funeral director will be able to give you advice and provide the necessary forms for you to complete. You will need a form SF200.

The funeral director will need the Certificate of Burial / Cremation that was given to you at the registration by the registrars.

If your baby was not registered i.e. if they were born at less than 24 weeks and did not show any signs of life following birth, an A & F form will be provided by the Hospital. This may be kept with your baby, or given to you directly for you to pass to the funeral directors.

If you want your baby to be buried, you also have the option of burying him/her yourself on private land, without the help of a funeral director. SANDs Information will be provided to you regarding the guidelines for burying your baby.

Taking Baby Home

There is no legal reason why parents should not take their baby home to make their own arrangements for the funeral unless the Coroner has requested a Post Mortem.

For your protection and to avoid any misunderstanding, there is paperwork which will be given for you to complete.

Some parents decide to take their baby home the night before the funeral and the funeral director can assist with this.

Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society (SANDs) Teardrop Sticker

With your consent this sticker is placed on the outside of the mother's maternity notes to highlight that she has had a baby who has died. This ensures that everyone who comes into contact with the bereaved mother is aware of her loss and prevents insensitive questions being asked, especially in subsequent pregnancies.

The sticker is not placed on your general medical notes, so when attending other departments the staff will be unaware of your maternity history.

The Book of Remembrance

Within East Lancashire there are two baby remembrance books and these are kept within the Spiritual Care Centre/Chapel at both Royal Blackburn hospital and Burnley General Hospital. Forms are available for you to complete should you wish to make an entry in the book.

The books are on display in locked bespoke cabinets, and the book will be open on your page when it is the anniversary. Once your entry has been printed in the book a copy will be sent to you for your mementos if you wish.

You are able to visit as often as you would like to view the entry made for your baby, and this can be arranged by contacting the hospital chaplaincy team on 01254 733632.

The Annual Remembrance Service

There are two remembrance services held annually within East Lancashire. You can light a candle in memory of your baby.

- **Blackburn**
The remembrance service is held each year on the last Sunday in October, at St Joseph's Church, Audley Range, Blackburn BB1 1TG, 2pm
- **Nelson**
The remembrance service is held each year on the second Sunday in December, at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 7EN, 2pm

Refreshments are available following each service.

Parents whom received care within the central birth suite or neonatal unit may receive a formal invite for the first year only following their baby's stillbirth / death, but are welcome to attend any year or every year if they wish. Please tell staff if you do not wish to receive an invitation to the service.

Hospital Bi-Monthly Remembrance Services

Services are held every alternate month – January, March, May, July, September and November in the spiritual care centre (Chapel) on both sites:

- **Royal Blackburn Hospital**
Last Wednesday in the month at 4pm
- **Burnley General Hospital**
Last Tuesday in the month at 4pm

Bereavement Support

The death of a baby is a devastating experience, awakening emotions and feelings that you might never have felt before. It is the traumatic loss of all your hopes and aspirations for the future. It is quite normal when bereaved to feel guilt, anger, emptiness and shock. All of these are natural reactions and need time, reflection and care. You may feel very 'up and down' fluctuating between all the various emotions. You might even find yourself laughing and wanting to share those special moments which you may have shared with your baby; forgetting reality for a moment and then feeling guilty again. This is normal and even healthy. However occasionally you may feel 'stuck' in your grief, and this may not be healthy. Please do not feel that you have to face this grief alone.

Please be aware that East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust has a dedicated Bereavement Care Service and Team. This team is made up of a Bereavement Care Co-ordinator and Bereavement Support Midwife working alongside the Bereavement Care Service Staff, Mortuary Staff, Coroners Officers and Registrars to ensure a smooth process takes place as far as possible. We also rely on the nursing, midwifery and medical staff, along with the hospital Chaplains, to be available to give support and advice.

Today we have a better understanding of the process of grieving and there are organisations and groups to offer long term help and support. You will find a list of contact numbers for some of them on the final page of this booklet. In the days immediately after your loss you may find it helpful to talk about your feelings with:-

- Your own Family Doctor or General Practitioner
- Your Spiritual Director
- Members of your family

- Close friends
- However, you may prefer to talk to someone outside of your family and friends. Please consider contacting the Bereavement Care Co-ordinator / Midwife.
- You may also wish to access the 'Closed' facebook group for parents - 'butterfly friends'

Remember

- Don't suffer in silence
- Look after your feelings
- Don't be afraid to ask for help

Grieving Children & Adolescents

Children can understand the meaning of death by the time they are three or four years old. They feel the loss of a brother / sister, close friend or relative in much the same way as adults. Even in infancy it is clear that children grieve and feel great distress.

Children experience the passage of time differently from adults and can therefore appear to overcome grief quite quickly.

However children in their early school years may need reassuring that they are not responsible for the death of a brother / sister, or close relative as they often blame themselves for one reason or another.

It is important that the grief of a young person is not overlooked, and young people should be encouraged to talk about their feelings.

Perinatal Review

Within East Lancashire it is common practice to review all cases following a Stillbirth, Neonatal or Child death in accordance with National Guidance.

If there are issues highlighted within the initial review or if family express concerns about the level of care provided and feel that it may have contributed in some way to the death of the baby a further in-depth investigation will be undertaken.

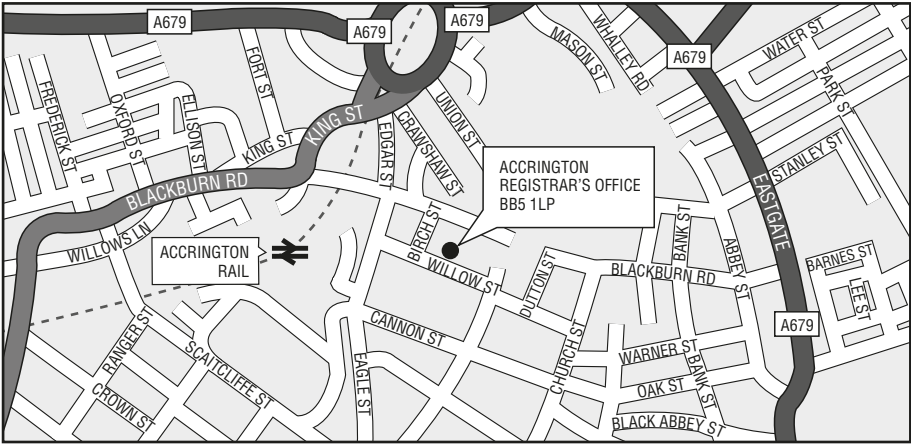
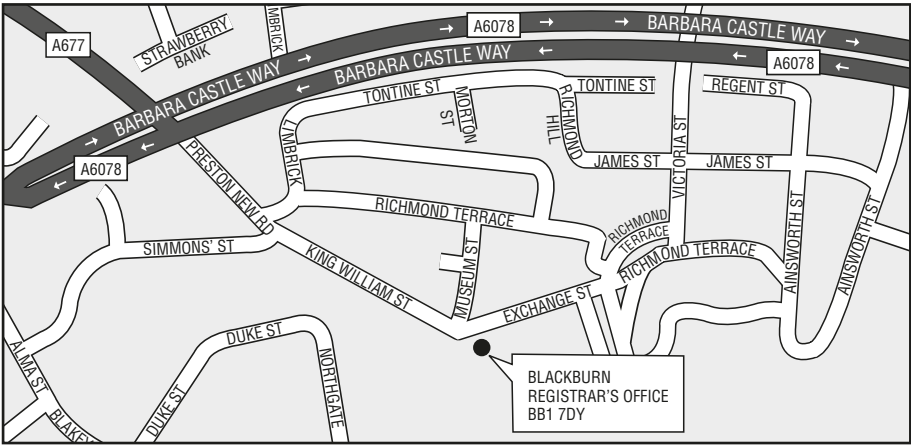
You will receive a letter confirming that a further in depth investigation of care is being conducted, and you will also be offered the opportunity to contribute towards this investigation

Following completion of the investigation you will be invited to discuss the findings of the report with professionals.

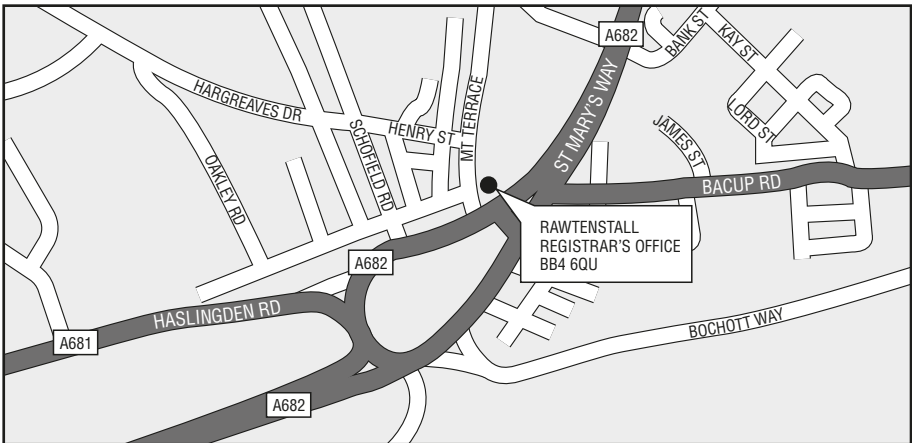
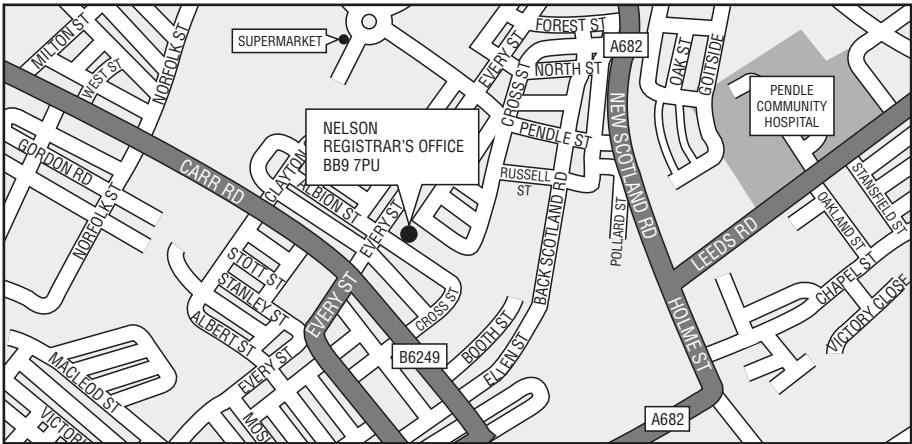
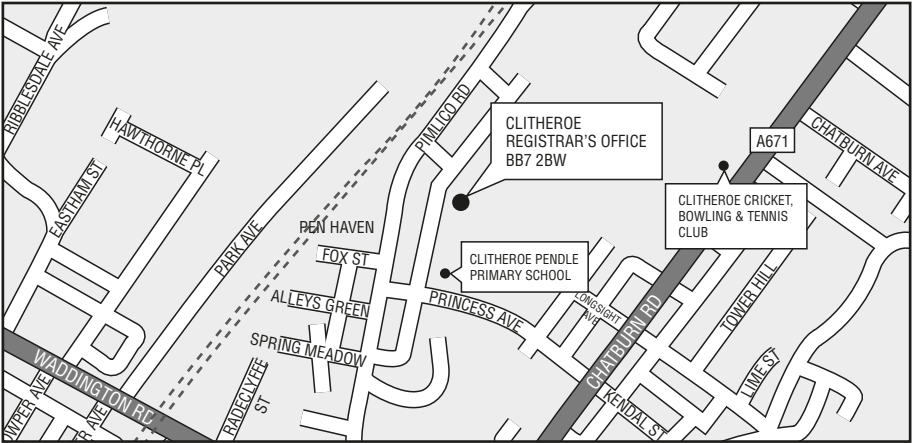
If you have any concerns regarding the level of care received you can email FamilyCareQuality.SafetyTeam@elht.nhs.uk.

Alternatively you may contact our Customer Relations Team on 01254 773708.

Maps for Registrar's Offices



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Further Advice and Support

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)

Website: www.uk-sands.org

Helpline: **020 7436 7940**

Email: helpline@uk-sands.org

Miscarriage Association

Website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Helpline: **01924 200 799**

Email: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Twins and Multiple Births Association (TAMBA) Bereavement Support Group

Website: www.tamba.org.uk

Helpline: **01252 332 344**

Email: enquiries@tamba.org.uk

Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)

Website: www.arc-uk.org

Helpline: **0845 077 2290** or 0207 713 7486 from a mobile

Email: info@arc-uk.org

Cruse Bereavement Care

Website: www.cruse.org.uk

Helpline: **0808 808 1677**

Email: info@cruse.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

Website: www.childbereavementuk.org

Helpline: **0800 02 888 40**

Email: support@childbereavementuk.org

Winston's Wish

Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Helpline: **0808 802 0021**

Email: info@winstonswish.org.uk

BLISS the premature baby charity

Website: www.bliss.org.uk

Helpline: **0808 801 0322**

Email: ask@bliss.org.uk

Department of Work and Pensions

Provides benefits and services for a wide range of people.

Website: www.gov.uk

Helpline: **0800 055 6688**

Benefits Advice

If you are receiving benefits and need financial support for your baby's funeral please ask for an **SF200** form from your funeral director or local job centre.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Bereavement Advice Centre National Helpline (freephone)	0800 6349494
Central Birth Suite (Burnley)	01282 804232
Chaplaincy	01254 733632
Citizens Advice Bureau (Blackburn)	0344 4889622
Citizens Advice Bureau (Burnley)	01282 450535
Coroners Officer's Office (Blackburn)	01254 734116
Coroners Officer's Office (Burnley)	01282 804508
Department of Work and Pensions	0800 055 6688
Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit	01282 804268
Gynaecology Ward	01282 804270
Mortuary (Blackburn)	01254 732067
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit	01282 804255
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)	0800 587 2586
Samaritans National Helpline (24hrs)	116 123
Switchboard (Blackburn)	01254 263555
Switchboard (Burnley)	01282 425071

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary-ruled notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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