



Policy and Guidance for Baby and Infant Funerals

Introduction

This policy and guidance has been provided to assist bereaved parents with making decisions that are right for them and provide a sympathetic and supportive context within which to do so.

It is formulated in accordance with the recommendations of SANDS (the stillbirth and neonatal death charity) and the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) which the Bramcote Crematorium is a member of, with the intention of providing bereavement information to parents.

Information for Parents

A message to bereaved parents:

We are so sorry that your baby has died. We hope that the information in this policy will explain the options available to you and that these help you to make decisions about your baby's funeral. Please remember, it is your right to arrange a private funeral that meets with your requirements and wishes at the cemetery or crematorium of your choice.

Alternatively, most hospitals will make arrangements for shared funeral services (that is, for more than one baby) at their local cemetery and/or crematorium. At this present time, the hospitals in Nottingham have an agreement with the Nottingham City Council to hold shared funerals at the Wilford Hill Crematorium and Southern Cemetery situated at West Bridgford and the Highwood Cemetery at Bulwell respectively.

It is hoped that the information below will help you make decisions about your preferred choice and the options available. Further help is also available through your funeral director and hospital Chaplaincy/Patient Affairs or Bereavement Office (the office/service title name can vary between hospitals).

You do not have to make any rushed decisions and should take time to consider the options available, especially with regard to the final disposal of the cremated remains. It is recommended that you make an appointment to visit the Crematorium/Cemetery of your choice so that you can see the chapels/service areas and talk with the staff about the service they offer and the service you need.

SANDS is a well-known national organisation that provides help and support to bereaved parents via a network of local groups. Some local groups have assisted burial and cremation authorities with developing their services to bereaved parents.

The Sands website (www.uk-sands.org) contains a wealth of advice and information that might help you make decisions on the funeral that meets with your needs. The Sands Helpline on 020 7436 5881 is available if you would like to speak to someone or be put in touch with your nearest Sands group. Sands also has a booklet for parents 'Deciding about a funeral for your baby' which can be ordered free from the Sands Shop or read online on the Sands website.

Burial or Cremation

It is your right to decide whether a burial or cremation service is provided for your baby.

If you select cremation, you must be aware that, in most cases, there will **usually** be some residual remains that can be returned to the family. However, in some cases of extreme prematurity and/or where a bio-degradable or similar cardboard coffin has been selected, there may be no retrievable remains. In such circumstances, the Crematorium will advise the family directly or through their Funeral Director immediately this occurs.

The Bramcote Crematorium has always conducted individual cremations with the appropriate techniques to guarantee, where possible, the full recovery of all available ashes from the cremations of babies.

Your Choices

Many NHS hospitals offer to organise and pay for a funeral for a baby who dies at any stage of pregnancy or shortly after birth. Parents can usually attend the funeral and can also usually make some decisions about the kind of service and how they will participate. Alternatively you can take full control and arrange a private funeral.

Hospital arrangements

The hospital authorities generally do not charge for making burial or cremation arrangements and will often pay any necessary cemetery or crematorium fees. Many local authorities offer their cemetery and/or crematorium service free.

At the Bramcote Crematorium, there are no fees for the Cremation of a child up to (and including) 15 years of age.

Some hospitals offer burial as well as cremation, whilst others offer cremation only. Where your preference is burial and the hospital only offers cremation, you will need to consider making a private arrangement as discussed below.

Some hospitals will arrange a burial or cremation where a number of babies are remembered at the same funeral service, but this is usually by a contractual arrangement with one Crematorium or Burial Authority only and, should you wish a cremation or burial to be elsewhere, this may have to be arranged privately.

Some parents can draw comfort from knowing that their baby has been laid to rest with others.

If you prefer the hospital to make arrangements, it is important that you speak to the appropriate officer at the hospital so that you are aware of the date and time of the funeral. In most places you can attend if you wish. You can also visit and speak to the manager of the cemetery or crematorium who will explain how and where shared burial takes place in the cemetery or, if a crematorium, the area of the grounds where the remains may be scattered on and the areas where cremation memorials, if available, can be provided.

It is important that you are satisfied with what will happen to your baby prior to the funeral as your decision may not be reversible after the funeral. The hospital should be able to inform you of what happens to the ashes resulting from a shared cremation, and that the location where they are buried or scattered is registered and can be identified by the crematorium after the cremation has taken place.

If elsewhere, you might wish to contact the crematorium of your choice before the cremation takes place to enquire about their policy regarding the recovery of ashes. If you are not satisfied you can take control and choose an alternative crematorium.

Irrespective of who makes the arrangements, the cemetery or crematorium will have options for remembrance and memorials if you wish to arrange a form of commemoration. An increasing number of cemeteries and crematoria are including children's burial sections and children's gardens of remembrance within their services, where shared funerals are conducted in exactly the same manner as private funerals. Some bereaved parents gain comfort from knowing that their baby was laid to rest with others.

The Bramcote Crematorium has a dedicated children's memorial area where ashes can be scattered and memorabilia can be left in a sheltered gazebo erected for that purpose.

Private arrangements

You can make your own funeral arrangements should you wish. You would then have full control of the arrangements, including where and when the funeral is to take place. You would be responsible for any costs associated with the funeral, but many funeral directors and cemeteries or crematoria make either no charge or a reduced charge for babies and children.

Whilst it might be a difficult task, you are advised to speak to more than one funeral director before making decisions as where charges are made, these can be high in some locations and especially in cities.

Should you wish to make arrangements yourself without using a funeral director, the cemetery or crematorium staff should be able to assist you by showing you the available options and giving practical help and advice regarding the certificates and

forms required. Your detailed requirements for the funeral service can also be made directly.

The Bramcote Crematorium has always used systems and procedures to enable the recovery of all the cremated remains but other Crematoria operate different systems and procedures.

You may of course arrange the funeral directly with other crematoria and without using a funeral director, but you should always ensure beforehand that the Crematorium you select can guarantee the full recovery of all the ashes resulting from the cremation.

If you choose a cremation service it is important to ask the crematorium for their effectiveness in recovering ashes. If your local crematorium can give no guarantee that the full ashes will be recovered, it is your right to choose one that does. Many crematoria can guarantee the recovery of ashes, even where the baby is of a very low term.

Burial Options

ICCM members are encouraged to create a Children's section within their Cemetery, where either shared or private funerals can be arranged. The graves in this section are usually small and are only suitable for the burial of babies and children and often with no facility for other remains to be interred at a later date.

When considering your options you may want to think about burying your baby in a conventional grave in the main area of the cemetery. In this case you would be able to use the same grave for one or two adults at some time in the future, possibly for a grandparent or a parent, without disturbing the baby, but this will usually incur significant additional costs.

If burial in a private grave is your preferred choice, whether in the main section or the Children's section of the cemetery, a deed will be issued to you giving what is known as the exclusive right to the grave. This means that nothing can be done to the grave without the written permission of the owner of the exclusive right. The owner, therefore, has total control over the memorial that might be placed on the grave (subject to the cemetery's rules and regulations) and any other matter relating to the grave. Some Burial Authorities may reduce or waive the interment or Grave-Rights fees, but this should be clarified beforehand as it may change or ultimately prevent your legal ownership of the grave rights.

Broxtowe and Erewash Borough Councils waive all interment fees for the burial of a child up to (and including) 15 years of age, but charge a full grave-rights fee.

You can visit the cemetery of your choice prior to the burial and be shown where the burial will take place. If you are not satisfied you can choose an alternative cemetery. If you choose burial in a shared grave your baby will be buried with others in the same grave. ICCM members are encouraged to locate these graves within the same Children's section where private graves are situated. You will not have any rights or

control over the grave, however some parents take comfort from knowing that their baby is with others.

Should you choose this option it should be noted that it will not be possible to reverse your decision and request an exhumation and reburial in a private grave as the consent of all parents of babies buried there would be required but could not be obtained.

Should you wish further assistance, guidance or advice regarding the burial options available at any of the Broxtowe or Erewash Borough Council cemeteries, please speak with one of the cemetery team members on 0115 9173630 or 0115 9173338.

Cremation Options

Cremation can be either via a private funeral service, i.e. one you arrange yourselves for your baby, or a shared cremation service, i.e. one where several babies are remembered together in a single service that can be attended by all the families.

If you choose a private cremation you should discuss your requirements for the service directly with your funeral director or with the crematorium.

You may of course, arrange the funeral directly with the crematorium and without using a funeral director, in which case you should always ensure beforehand that the Crematorium can guarantee the full recovery of all available ashes resulting from the cremation. If this cannot be guaranteed, you should select another crematorium.

Where ashes are recovered from a private cremation the crematorium will deal directly with the parent(s) regarding the scattering or burial of the ashes and memorial facilities.

Should you choose a shared cremation, the ashes of each baby will not be individually identifiable. The ashes will however be scattered or buried in the crematorium grounds, the location recorded and the hospital and/or Funeral Director will also be informed. You can find out if ashes were recovered or not by contacting the hospital, funeral director or crematorium after the cremation. Please note that there can often be a delay between the date of service and the subsequent cremation. This is quite normal and is conducted in accordance with ICCM guidance and regulations.

ICCM members are encouraged to create a children's garden of remembrance within their grounds where individual memorials may be arranged by the parent(s).

ICCM Charter Rights

Charter Rights for Parents

As members of the ICCM, the Bramcote Bereavement Services Joint Committee strives to uphold the following:

- It is your right to decide whether the hospital makes funeral arrangements (if this is offered) or whether you take full control of the funeral for your baby or infant and decide whether a burial or cremation will take place.
- It is your right to be able to choose a private cremation for your baby.
- It is your right to be able to receive accurate information about the cremation of your baby from the crematorium.
- It is your right to expect the crematorium to have a technique in place designed to maximise the full recovery of ashes.
- It is your right to be given all of the ashes* resulting from an individual cremation, or you can arrange that they can be buried or scattered with your written consent.
- It is your right to decide what happens to any metal recovered from a private, individual cremation and the crematorium must inform you of the options available which could include recycling for charitable purposes, or the return of the metal to you. Metal is likely to be that which was used in the construction of the coffin.
- It is your right to be able to arrange a memorial for your baby at the crematorium
- When arranging a private burial or cremation it is your right to decide on the type of coffin or container that your baby will be buried in e.g. traditional coffin, wicker, bamboo, biodegradable, shroud, although all coffins used, especially for cremation, must conform to the legislation and criteria in force at that time

*All of the ashes is defined as 'everything that is left in the cremator at the end of the cremation process following the removal of any metals.'