

# Taking your child home

Information and advice for bereaved parents and parents expecting the death of their child

## *Community Paediatric Palliative Care Team*

### **Your child's final days**

When you have been told that your child may only live for a few more days you may want to think about the best place to spend this time. You may wish to spend these days at home with your child, or in a hospice.

You may have already decided where you would like to be, but if you are not sure and need help to determine what is best for your family, the children's palliative care team and other staff caring for your child can support you in making this decision.

### **Taking your child home for their final days**

If you wish to be at home or in a hospice for your child's final days the community team and hospice are able to support this. You will be given a 'Rapid Discharge Plan' so this can happen as quickly as possible. The nurses looking after your child will help you arrange the most suitable way to transport your child home.

If your child dies on the way home or to the hospice you can continue home; you do not need to come back to the hospital.

### **After your child has died**

Following the death of your child, if they died in hospital, you may wish to take him or her home for a short time. This can give you the opportunity to spend time with your child quietly and privately.

### **Taking your child home**

If you would like to take your child home after their death please speak to the nurses looking after you so they can arrange this. You can take your child home with you from the Chapel of Rest.

If you go home and later decide that you would like to bring your child home, you can contact the manager on-call for the children's ward to arrange this.

If a post-mortem examination is needed you will not be able to take your child home until after this. If you would like to take your child home after this examination, please call the ward where your child died to arrange this.

You can take your child home yourself by car if you wish, or you may want to use a funeral director (they may charge for this service). If you take your child home yourself you can carry him or her in your arms, use a moses basket (if they are small enough) or, if you prefer, a casket from a funeral director. You will need to think about how fragile your child is when deciding this. The staff will be able to give you advice on this if you aren't sure.

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Before you leave the hospital, you will need to sign a form stating that you are taking your child home and will either be arranging their burial or cremation, or will be bringing them back to the hospital. You will then be given a letter which states that your child has died and you are taking them home. This is to prevent any misunderstanding.

### **What happens when we are at home?**

When you are home the room that your child is in will need to be kept cool and well ventilated. If it is very hot you can hire room coolers. A funeral director can advise you about this.

You should be aware that the appearance of your child's skin may change during this time. The nurse will discuss this with you before you leave the hospital so that you are aware of what may happen.

When you are at home with your child there are no rules about what you can and cannot do; you can spend the time as you choose. If you decide to take your child to a special place, make sure you carry the letter you have been given by the hospital with you to prevent any misunderstanding.

### **How long can I take my child home for?**

The length of time that your child is at home with you will depend on your wishes. Some parents have their child home the day or night before the burial or cremation, but others need more time.

There is no legal time limit for this, but it is important to remember that your child's appearance will change.

If you are arranging the funeral through a funeral director they can come to your home to collect your child.

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## ***Community Paediatric Palliative Care Team***

### **How to contact us**

If you have any more questions or need any more advice about taking your child home, you can contact the hospital on one of the following numbers:

#### **Community Paediatric Palliative Care Team**

0121 507 2633

Mobile: 07779 328 464 or 07773 427 431

Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 6pm

Saturday, 8.30am – 4.30pm

Outside of these hours please contact one of the following wards and ask to speak to the on call manager for the children's wards:

#### **Lyndon Ground**

0121 507 3266

#### **Lyndon One**

0121 507 3319

Alternatively you can contact the hospital switchboard on 0121 553 1831 and ask them to bleep the on-call manager for the children's wards on 6130.

### **Sources used for the information in this leaflet**

- Child Bereavement UK, 'Best practice guidance for the care of a family when their baby or child dies in the Neonatal, Paediatric or the Accident and Emergency Units', 2011
- Child Bereavement UK, 'Best practice guidance for families who wish to take their baby home after death', 2011

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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