



# Hospital review

## Information for bereaved parents

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**When a baby dies before, during or after birth, the hospital (or hospitals) should review the care the mother and baby received.**

**This is called a hospital 'perinatal' or 'neonatal' review and is when a medical team looks through the mother's and baby's hospital notes to understand events that led up to the death of the baby.**

A hospital review is part of standard NHS care and should be provided for every family following the death of a baby after 22 weeks' gestation. This is to ensure bereaved parents have as much information as possible about why their baby died.

Reviews are also an important opportunity for the hospital to learn from what happened when a baby died. Improvements in care and the prevention of future deaths are important outcomes of reviews, in addition to adequately answering parents' questions about the death of their baby.

### **Involving you**

As a bereaved parent, you should be told by your hospital that a review is going to take place. You should be offered the opportunity to ask questions or provide information about your care for the review team to think about during their review. You will not be asked to attend the review meeting yourself.

Once the review has happened you should be offered an appointment with your consultant to discuss the findings. This appointment may be several weeks after your baby died and might involve more than one meeting. This is because the information needed to complete the review may not be available until a few months later.

### **Post mortem**

A hospital review is different to a post mortem. A post mortem is carried out by a specialist doctor called a pathologist and tries to understand the pathological cause of death – the medical reason. Every parent should be offered the opportunity to consent to a post mortem on their baby. If you have consented to a post mortem, information from it will be included in the hospital review to get as wide a picture as possible about events leading up to the stillbirth or death of your baby.

## Other types of review

A hospital review is different to a coroner's investigation or inquest. If your baby died in circumstances that have concerned the hospital where they think poor care may have played a role, then a Health Safety Investigation Branch investigation may also take place. This is different to a hospital review. You can find more information about different reviews and investigations that take place on our website:

[www.sands.org.uk/support-you/understanding-why-your-baby-died](http://www.sands.org.uk/support-you/understanding-why-your-baby-died)

## What to do if there are unacceptable delays

If you haven't heard from the hospital regarding the review into your baby's death or post mortem results and have concerns, we advise that you write to the hospital using our template letters, 'review delay letter' 'post mortem delay letter'. These letters are only a guide to the language and questions you might ask. You may add any further details, including emotional issues you are experiencing.

We advise you send the letter as an email to the names and email addresses you have been given for your bereavement midwife/consultant obstetrician or neonatologist (if your baby died as a newborn), and that you also include (cc) the email address for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at your hospital. This can usually be found on the NHS website for your hospital.

## Support for you

It can be a difficult time waiting to hear the outcome of the review or post mortem.

If you would like to talk to someone about how you are coping, please do contact

**Sands helpline 0808 164 3332**

or see our website for further ways we can offer support:

**[sands.org.uk/support-you](http://sands.org.uk/support-you)**

