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Request for Information Reference: 01.16.11

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Email only

8 February 2016

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 7 January 2016 in relation to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (Trust). We are dealing with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested information regarding the facilities for the bereavement of a child. Specifically you asked:

(a) Does your Trust have a bereavement suite available for use by parents in the event of limited life expectancy of an anticipated birth of a child?

Answer: Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH) does not have a designated bereavement suite, but there is a room on the labour ward which can be used for bereaved families. This room is en-suite and has facilities for families to stay overnight.

University Hospital North Durham (UHND) has a room that is dedicated to pregnancy loss within the unit.

(b) If the answer to (a) is no, what alternative arrangements are available?

Answer: Please see the answer to question (a).

(c) If the answer to (a) is yes, would parents of a baby who turn up at hospital with a sudden infant death be allowed to use the bereavement suite?

Answer:

DMH: N/A.

UHND: babies who suffer sudden infant death would not be admitted to maternity.

(d) If the answer is yes to (a) where in relation to the Labour ward is the suite located?

Answer:

DMH: N/A.

UHND have 10 rooms the bereavement room is room number 10 that is separated from the other rooms by a lift area and an office

(e) Do you have bereavement trained midwives? If yes, how many?

Answer: The Trust has Bereavement Support Officers on both main sites who support women and families following pregnancy loss. Midwives do receive training covering bereavement including an in-house full day workshop 'exploring issues around pregnancy loss.' A number of midwives have also taken on extra roles and responsibilities surrounding pregnancy loss and have attended SANDS workshops 'caring for parents.'

(f) Do you have a trained bereavement councillor at the hospital? If yes, what is the average waiting time to be able access support from that councillor?

Answer: The Trust has a trained bereavement councillor who works part time at DMH and a bereavement officer at UHND. They would make an initial contact with the family usually within the same week. Waiting list is approx. 2-3 weeks following referral.

(g) Do you provide any written information to parents following the loss of a baby? If yes, please name the third sector organisation information is provided from.

Answer: Yes, written information is provided for the family, info provided via SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society).

(h) Can you list the guidelines around infant death which are implemented by the hospital?

Answer: The Trust has a guideline - intrparum / inteuterine death, or for a new-born that has died around the time of birth. There is a policy on Intra uterine death & termination of pregnancy for fatal loss, and also check lists that support the care process from discovery of a pregnancy loss through to postnatal care.

For Infant deaths there is Guidelines for the Management of Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC) policy, which is currently under review.

(i) Does the hospital provide support around funeral arrangements for infants or babies who have died at the hospital?

Answer: There is a full time bereavement support officer who organises funerals including financial support for babies that have died and delivered on the labour ward, if the family request this.

(j) Does the hospital advise parents on the advantages of having a post mortem conducted where this is not compulsory?

Answer: Written information is given on a post mortem and the consultant in charge would discuss this with the family as well as make a referral to Genetic counselling.

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust website.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by writing to:

The Chief Executive
County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX

If, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.gov.uk.

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tyrrell
Freedom of Information Officer