

# *Guidance through your loss*

*baby and infant funerals*



## *Guidance for baby and infant funerals*

This guide is here to help you through all the processes that are involved in making funeral arrangements right through to attending the funeral.

Lives are very different; the passing of a life is very individual and so the service of special little babies should significantly reflect their short lives and those families touched by them.

Nothing is as traumatic as the death of a baby and we are so very sorry for your loss.

During this time of intense grief, you may feel worried about what to do next. It is important to know that you are not alone, you will be supported by a wonderful team of caring, dedicated individuals who will do everything they can to help you through this difficult time.

This leaflet, produced by Isle of Wight Council Bereavement Services, provides information about the choices you have for your baby's funeral, we hope it will take away some of your worries and help you to reach a decision.

Bereavement services is part of the Isle of Wight Council and is based at the Isle of Wight Crematorium, Station Lane, Whippingham, PO32 6NJ.

We have the honour and responsibility to help arrange the burial and cremation of all age groups across the Island, including babies born before their time.

## *When a baby passes away...*

For legal reasons, distinction is made between babies who pass away before or after 24 weeks gestation. The process of registration differs according to the circumstances and age of your baby; you will be guided by the hospital and registrars in respect of this. Regardless of when your baby has died the choices you will have for your baby's funeral are very similar.

Bereavement services, together with your chosen funeral director are able to offer a range of choices for your baby's funeral, at little or no cost to you. You are of course, welcome to make your own private arrangements if you prefer. However, we may not be able to meet all the costs if this were the case.

You will find a brief summary of the types of services we offer in this booklet. Should you require any further information please contact bereavement services on **01983 882288**, who will be pleased to answer any queries you may have.



## Born too soon

Every four months a burial service is held in the *baby garden* at the Isle of Wight Crematorium for babies born too soon, usually for those born up to 24 weeks gestation. The services are facilitated by bereavement services, a funeral director and St Mary's Hospital chaplain or a celebrant. We work closely together to ensure the utmost respect and dignity prevails. You can attend the burial service with family and friends if you wish, but we understand that this may be something that you cannot face at this very emotional and distressing time in your life.

## After the funeral service

Shortly after the *born too soon* service a memorial stone bearing the date of the burial and the inscription 'Born Too Soon' is placed on the grave. However, it is not an individual grave due to several babies being buried together, no individual parents own any right to the grave in respect of placing an individual memorial – except for fresh cut flowers. We have a memorial chalet in the *baby garden* called '*angels rest*' for use by anyone who has lost a child. The chalet is a place where memorials can be left in memory of your child and where families can gather and meet in quiet reflection, close to the location of where your baby has been laid to rest. There is provision for you to place memorials within the chalet if you so wish, in colourful boxes with your child's name on. These boxes are kindly provided by SANDS (Stillbirth And Neonatal Death Charity), please call into the crematorium office for these – there is no charge.

If parents wish, we are able to arrange a separate, individual burial service or cremation for those born too soon. If you chose cremation we have a procedure in place that aids full recovery of your baby's remains.

## Older babies and children

There is an adjoining area of the *baby garden* at the Isle of Wight Crematorium dedicated to older babies and children up to the age of 16 years. In this area we provide for individual graves of babies and children including those that have been cremated. Parents are offered the right to place an approved memorial to identify their child's individual grave in this part of the crematorium grounds. For burials in this area, there is a right to erect a memorial that must be purchased; this can be done at a later date after the funeral has taken place and can be arranged with our cemeteries officer in the crematorium office. The '*angels rest*' memorial chalet is close by where you may place special mementoes. Items such as teddy bears and other memorials are not allowed on the burial area.

We fully understand that you wish to remember your child in a very individual way and sometimes it is difficult to enforce rules and regulations regarding the type of memorials that we will accept. The memorial rights to these individual resting places are documented and registered with us, if you are unsure we can advise on the type of memorial that is allowed here. We need to be fair in our decisions and hope that we can work together to ensure the tranquil and peaceful setting is maintained for all. Some items, especially plastic, fabric and paper tend to fade or disintegrate quite quickly and need to be removed

as they become broken and can be a risk for those visiting or working in the area. Ideally, we would like you to discuss your ideas with us before you organise or place anything on the grave. A temporary wooden marker/cross may be placed on the grave until the time is right to erect a permanent memorial. Some of the things that we feel are not suitable are small loose stones or pebbles in irregular or over size shapes surrounding the grave, wooden edging, multiple small items placed on the grass, plastic flowers and glass or ceramic ornaments. Although these may be special to you, as mentioned above they do not last long and makes it very difficult for our gardeners to tend the area.



## Individual burial or cremation

The choice of a burial or cremation for your child is extremely personal. Should you decide to have your baby cremated, the cremated remains can be buried or scattered in a location of your choice.

As well as the *baby garden* at the Isle of Wight Crematorium there are other choices of location for burials such as individual or family graves in a cemetery or private woodland areas. Bereavement services can assist with arrangements but are unable to meet all the costs of burials in locations other than in the *baby garden* at the Isle of Wight Crematorium.

## Making funeral arrangements

Choose a funeral provider. When you decide to make arrangements for your child's funeral, you're probably feeling overwhelmed. One of the first things you will need to do is decide on a funeral provider to organise the service. There is no law requiring you to use a funeral director for your child's service. However it will make arrangements much easier and less emotionally painful for you.

Some factors to consider in choosing a funeral director include location (ideally close to home), reputation or recommendation from friends or relatives.

## Give the funeral director your child's information

Once you've chosen a funeral director, you will need to give the director some basic information. This will help him or her make arrangements, acquire the necessary paperwork, and help you put together a meaningful tribute to your child. Some information that the funeral director may require will include:

- your child's full name;
- the date of birth of the deceased, as well as their place and date of death;
- the child's next of kin;
- your name, contact information, and relationship to the child;
- the name of the Midwife (If applicable);
- how soon you would like the service to take place.

## Decide which type of funeral to choose

When planning the funeral, you need to decide on whether to have a cremation or a burial. You may want to discuss this with other members of the family.

## Letting people know

Contact and notify people close to you and your child.

It's up to you and your family to decide how many people to notify and invite to the funeral. You may wish to have a small, private ceremony, or you may want a lot of people there, depending on how big a circle of family and friends you have.

Some important people to notify of your child's passing are:

- any relatives;
- friends, and close neighbours;
- a religious officiant/celebrant.

If you do choose to make people aware, posting a death notice in the local paper can be a good way to let people know about the passing of your child. Most newspapers will run the death notice for one day, with the option of running it on multiple days for an added price.

There is usually a deadline on how quickly a newspaper can print the death notice. For example, some newspapers require notice by a certain time the day before the notice is to be printed, while other publications may require more time. Your funeral director will be able to help you with this. You will need to provide the details of your child and any funeral or memorial service information.

## Flowers or donations for the funeral

You may want to have family floral tributes only for your child's funeral service.

If this is the case you will need to let the funeral director know this is your wish so that he/she can advise accordingly to anybody enquiring about your child's funeral. Another way of letting people know that this is your wish is to include this in your death notice with your chosen newspaper. You may want to advise people that in lieu of flowers a donation can be made to a chosen charity.

## Arrange for transportation

Another important factor to consider when making funeral preparations is transportation to and from the service. You can make your own travel arrangements or you can arrange for the funeral director to provide a car or limousine to transport you and your family to the funeral service.



## Emotionally preparing yourself and others for a funeral

You may feel some commitment to "stay strong" for other people.

However, you should not take on this responsibility, as this could end up from stopping you from grieving properly at the time of death, causing more difficulties for you further down the line. Remember you're allowed to grieve too.

If you feel like crying, don't be afraid to do so. If you don't feel like crying, that's okay as well.

You don't have to say or do anything that doesn't feel natural or comfortable to you at the funeral service. Everyone there is going through a sense of loss and grief to a greater or lesser degree. If you have other children talk to them about the funeral. He or she may have a lot of questions about death and grieving during this difficult time. It may be hard to have these types of conversation with your child, but it's important that he or she understands what's happening so as to avoid confusion and anguish later.

Let your child ask as many questions as he or she needs to. Try to answer every question as honestly and completely as you can.

Structure your answers in a way that a child can understand. Think about your child's age and previous experience with death (pets or plants, for example), and consider referring to these losses in your conversation.

## If you choose to have a burial

Once you have made funeral arrangements with your funeral director they will collate all the mandatory paper work that the cemeteries officer requires before the burial can take place.

Once all paper work has been delivered, the cemeteries officer will have all the information required to provide the cemeteries grave diggers with the following:

- grave number;
- grave size;
- date and time that the interment is to take place.

A member of the bereavement services team will also mark out the grave in accordance to the cemetery master map enabling grave diggers to know the exact location of the grave to be excavated.

Dependent on the time of the funeral the grave diggers will excavate the grave to the correct size, depth and location either the day before, or in the morning of the day of the funeral.

Once the grave has been dug it will be dressed in readiness for the funeral procession.

*What you can expect:*

- green matting simulating grass placed in and around the grave;
- flower petals sprinkled in the base of the grave;
- a baby embroidered blanket laid out to receive the coffin, which will have coiled tapes (webs) used to lower the coffin into the grave.

## The funeral service

Dependent on the instructions you gave to your funeral director, they will either;

- Come to your address with your child in either a hearse or hearsette and any additional cars you may have requested to take you to the cemetery.
- Make their way to the cemetery in either a hearse or hearsette as instructed, meeting you at the cemetery.

## At the crematorium baby garden

Once at the crematorium the hearse/hearsette will (dependent on your choice of funeral service location) either arrive at:

- Crematorium Chapel
- Crematorium Garden of Remembrance entrance.

If you are making your own way to the funeral service it is advisable to arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the service time. This will give you the opportunity to see/receive your child as they arrive and also meet with your chosen officiant prior to the service taking place. *Many families find comfort when meeting with their officiant, allowing them time to discuss and ask any questions they may have about the service prior to it taking place.*

When the time comes to start the service, and dependent on where the service is going to take place, you will be led by the funeral director and the chapel attendant to either the Crematorium Chapel or the *baby garden*.

## The Chapel

The funeral director will receive your child from the hearse/hearsette (*you can if you wish, request to carry your child yourself*).

You will enter the chapel and walk along the main aisle up to the chapel altar where the funeral director will place your child.

The altar will have a white shawl laid out with a number of soft toys. If you would rather that no soft toys are present you can ask your funeral director at the time of making funeral arrangements.

The funeral director will then direct you to your seats while the officiant will make their way to the lectern from where they will deliver the service for your child.

Once the service in the chapel has reached the point of committal the officiant will indicate to you and the funeral director that the committal will take place at the graveside.

The funeral director will walk forward to the altar and begin to carry your child to the graveside, with the officiant asking you to follow. Any other mourners will then follow on behind you.

You will all walk at a respectful pace from the chapel, through the Garden of Remembrance to the *baby garden*. The rest of the service will take place at the grave.





## *Baby garden - angels rest burial plot*

You will be met by the chapel attendant or your funeral director and directed to wait at the entrance to the Garden of Remembrance. The funeral director will receive your child from the hearse/hearse/ settee although you can request to carry your child if you wish.

The funeral director along with the officiant will walk forward through the Garden of Remembrance with you following behind, making their way to the *angels rest* burial plot with any other mourners who will be attending.

The funeral director will place your child's coffin on the embroidered blanket at the side of the grave, placing the webs that will be used to lower the coffin into the grave underneath it.

You will then all be asked to gather around the grave and the service will commence.

At the point of committal the funeral director will lift your child's coffin using the webs and gently lower the coffin into the grave whilst the officiant reads words of committal, these will differ dependent on the nature of the service (religious/non-religious). The officiant may say a prayer or use a poem in concluding the service.

Once the service has finished you will have the opportunity to have some privacy alone at the graveside if you wish, or you may want to speak with the officiant and other mourners. Remember there is no rush and you can take as much time as you need.

## *Once you are ready to leave*

If the funeral director provided you with a limousine they will take you home or to another previously discussed destination.

## *When you have left the baby garden*

The grave diggers will remove the grave dressings and return all the soil back to the grave, replacing the grass turf and leaving the grave in a tidy condition.

Any floral tributes will be placed on top of the grave where they will remain for one week; they may be removed sooner if they have perished.

After one month has passed and ground conditions permitting, bereavement services grounds staff will place a stone border around your child's grave with a grave marker so that you can identify the plot when you visit.

## *If you choose to have a cremation*

***Please note that cremation procedures are included here and may be upsetting for some to read.***

Once you have made funeral arrangements with your funeral director they will collate all the mandatory paperwork that the cremations officer requires before the cremation can take place.

The Isle of Wight Council's cremation technicians understand that the loss of your child is one of the most upsetting and distressing times that a family will go through. They understand that the service they provide will need to reflect on all the interests of a bereaved family when their baby or infant is left in their care and will be the central focus of their attention. This will also be reflected in all of our administrative and operational practices and procedures.

We have established a thoughtful approach for the cremation of babies and infants that is intended to maximise the recovery of ashes. This comprises of the use of a cremation tray designed to retain ashes that will minimise the loss of ashes during the process of cremation.

Staff will be attentive during the cremation process and adjust operational conditions where necessary in order to protect the ashes of babies and infants and to maximise their recovery.

We will adhere to our identification procedure which guarantees that the ashes returned to parents from each individual cremation are those of their baby or child.

## *Shared cremations*

We do not carry out shared cremations. We have a dedicated, born to soon, baby and infant burial plot within the crematorium grounds and work in close co-ordination with SANDS, St Mary's midwife team, funeral directors and ministers/celebrants to ensure we are meeting and maintaining bereaved families expectations and needs.



## Disposal of ashes

The crematorium will only act upon the written instruction of the parent who is acting as the applicant for cremation, or any other person nominated in writing by the parent.

Ashes will be held at the crematorium for up to one month to await collection by the funeral director or the applicant for cremation, or to await further instructions. Where no further instructions have been received within the one month period, a further fourteen days' notice will be given in writing to the applicant, after this time the ashes will be scattered upon the lawns of the *baby garden*.

As with all cremations, babies and infants will be registered at the crematorium, with all information contained in forms and certificates being retained indefinitely. This will be in a dedicated baby/infant register and index.

If ashes are scattered within the grounds of the crematorium the final resting place will be recorded. When ashes are to be collected, the person nominated to collect must provide photo identification upon visiting the crematorium office. Once they have been collected, the details of the person authorised by the applicant to remove/collect the ashes will be registered.

The policy of this crematorium ensures an audit trail from the receipt of initial funeral instructions to the final disposal of ashes, either by collection from the crematorium or by scattering or burial within the confines of the crematorium grounds.

## Cremation procedure

Baby cremations will be carried out as the last cremation of the day.

Once the funeral service has taken place the coffin will be delivered by hand via the catafalque into the crematory and placed reverently in the cold room until the time for cremation.

All paperwork relating to the child will be checked and the authorisation to cremate placed on the cremator that the child will be cremated in. The coffin will be placed reverently into the cremation tray specifically designed for the purpose. The tray and coffin will be then placed on the manual bier which in turn will be positioned in front left of the cremator door.

The cremator programme will be selected to baby cremation and the cremator allowed to reach charging temperature. Once the cremator is at temperature the door will be activated. The bier table with the coffin (and the aid of a second technician) will be placed as far as allows into the cremator. The coffin and tray will be pushed to the back left hand side of the cremator with the bespoke tray rake, making sure that it is clear of burners and the exit flue. The door will then be closed and the cremation started.

The cremation process will be carefully monitored through until completion (until the last natural flame has extinguished). The cremator will be switched off and left over night.

## Cremulation

The cremator will be switched on and the door released and opened. The tray and ashes will be removed from the cremator with the bespoke tray rake, and placed to cool on the bespoke tray stand.

Once cooled the tray and remains will be transported the cremulation room. The remains will reverently have any metals removed. The remains will be placed in a pestle and mortar and reduced to a fine ash. The ash will be placed via a purpose made plastic bag into in a baby plastic urn and then boxed, unless instructed otherwise.

The ashes and regulatory paperwork will be taken to the main office and given to a member of the office team until collection. Ashes of your child will be kept wrapped in a small baby blanket and looked after by a member of our office team until you or your funeral director are ready to collect them.



***Angels rest cemetery regulations and burials.***

All burials must be in grave spaces shown in the *angels rest* cemetery plans. Notice of burial may be given between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Written burial applications must be delivered to the cemeteries officer at least two clear working days prior to each interment and must include all mandatory documentation of registration of death.

The hours of interment will be between the hours of 9am and 3.30pm Mondays to Thursdays, and 9am and 2.30pm on Fridays.

All new graves sought in reserve or provided for burial will be purchased before any burial within that grave will be authorised.

The selection of a plot by the applicant shall be subject to the approval of the burial authority and may incur a charge.

All graves in *angels rest* cemetery will be dug to a single depth only. If a grave is required for more than one interment any of the burial authority's other 12 cemeteries should be considered.

Prior to any erection of any memorial for which permission is required on a grave space the *right to erect and maintain a memorial* must be completed and delivered to the cemeteries officer.





## Memorials

When you are ready to place a memorial upon your child's grave, please contact bereavement services in the first instance so you can be correctly advised as to what can and cannot be placed in the *baby garden* to avoid any potential upset.

No monument, lettering or other memorial shall be permitted to be erected or placed in the *baby garden* of the Isle of Wight Crematorium without written permission of bereavement services and the payment of the appropriate fee.

Applications for approval shall be forwarded to the cemeteries officer on the bereavement services official form, and must include a drawing of the proposed memorial showing the design and dimensions, together with a specification of the material of which the memorial is constructed. A copy of all inscriptions to be cut on the memorial must be sent with the drawing.

All memorials, and any memorial work must be carried out by a qualified stonemason, or a person qualified and insured to carry out the work and authorised by bereavement services.

Only marble, granite or natural hard stone shall be used in the construction of memorials. No soft stone, concrete or artificial stone of any kind shall be used in the construction of any memorial.

Glass vases or containers are prohibited and will be removed from the grounds.

Temporary memorials may be placed upon a grave for a period not exceeding one month following the burial date and providing an application has been made to the Cemeteries Officer.

All memorials shall be kept in good repair in a safe and tidy condition by the applicant. It is recommended that memorials are insured against damage, as all memorials erected in the Isle of Wight Crematorium *baby garden* are at the applicant's own risk.

After the erection of a memorial, all surplus materials must be removed, and the area left tidy.

Bereavement services reserve the right to remove any memorial which it considers may constitute a risk to public safety or a danger to the public or contractors.

All unsuitable memorials removed from the Isle of Wight Crematorium *baby garden* will be safely stored for one month awaiting collection, after which time they will be disposed of.

No memorial will exceed 18 inches in height.

## General

All persons including children shall conduct themselves in a quiet orderly and well-mannered fashion whilst on crematorium cemetery grounds.

No persons including children shall play any game or sport within the crematorium cemetery grounds or unlawfully disturb any person assembled for the purpose of attending a burial or cremation.

No person or child shall sit, stand or climb upon any memorial, fence, gate, building belonging to the crematorium cemetery grounds.

No person or child shall commit any nuisance within the crematorium cemetery grounds.

The playing of radios and similar equipment is forbidden.

The use of cameras, video recorders to capture any part of a funeral service, grave or memorial is not allowed except by permission of the bereavement services manager and the next of kin or representative of the deceased being interred.

The bereavement services office has the right to exclude any article, object or memorial which has not had the approval of bereavement services officers.

The council reserves the right to carry out any work within the crematorium cemetery to maintain such grounds as they feel necessary and only by their permission shall any other persons be allowed to carry out any work within such grounds.

All applicants are entitled to request a box for the *angel's rest* chalet, where keepsakes and mementoes not suitable for placing upon graves, such as soft toys, may be stored.

These procedures and regulations are subject to alteration without notification by the council at any time as it may be deemed necessary and all grave spaces and memorials are subject to these regulations and any other orders that may be introduced from time to time.

The burial service for those *born too soon* takes place on the first Wednesday each February, June and October. Everyone meets by the crematorium chapel at 9.30am for the service in the *baby garden*. Actual dates are available from St Mary's Hospital Midwives or by contacting Isle of Wight Bereavement Services on 01983 882288 or 883010.

## Funeral directors

### *Brighthill Funeral Directors*

20A Weeks Road, Ryde, PO33 2TP.

Tel: 01983 717554

### *Co-operative Funeralcare*

8-10 Ferry Road, East Cowes, PO38 6RA.

Tel: 01983 291263

### *Co-operative Funeralcare*

Avenue Road, Freshwater, PO40 9UU.

Tel: 01983 756503

### *Co-operative Funeralcare*

The Cranbourne Rest, 61 Upper St James Street, Newport, PO30 1LQ.

Tel: 01983 537213

### *Co-operative Funeralcare*

45 St Johns Road, Ryde, PO33 2RN.

Tel: 01983 615746

### *Co-operative Funeralcare*

76 Regent Street, Shanklin, PO37 7AP.

Tel: 01983 861196

### *Downer and White*

43 Sandown Road, Lake, PO36 9JL.

Tel: 01983 402073

### *F L Lloyd*

Bridge Road, Cowes, PO31 7DT.

Tel: 01983 293716

### *Geoff Leather*

40 Place Road, Cowes, PO31 7UB.

Tel: 01983 292932

### *Geoff Leather*

45 St James St, Newport, PO30 1LG.

Tel: 01983 529090

### *Hamilton and Marshall*

Medina Way, Newport, PO30 5QD.

Tel: 01983 522772

### *Hamilton and Marshall*

145 High Street, Ryde, PO33 2RE.

Tel: 01983 210620

### *Henry Ingram and Sons*

12 Albert Street, Ventnor, PO38 1EZ.

Tel: 01983 852028

### *HV Taylor & Son Limited*

45 Green Street, Ryde, PO33 2QE.

Tel: 01983 562082

### *R&P Everson Funeral Directors*

The Broadway, Totland, PO39 0AN.

Tel: 01983 755733

### *Weaver Bros Limited*

Lane End Road, Bembridge, PO35 5UE.

Tel: 01983 872598

### *William Hall*

Winford Road, Newchurch, PO36 0JX.

Tel: 01983 868688

We hope you have found the information in this leaflet helpful. We are grateful to SANDS (*Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity*) for their input and support of the *baby garden* and the families who use it. The contact details for SANDS are below, along with others you may find useful.

### **SANDS** (*Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity*)

St. Mary's Midwives Tel: **01983 524081**

or the SANDS helpline Tel: **0808 1643332**.

### **Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths**

Seaclose Offices, Fairlee Road, Newport

PO30 2QS. Tel: **01983 823233**.

### **Mountbatten**

Halberry Lane, Newport, PO30 2ER.

Tel: **01983 533776**

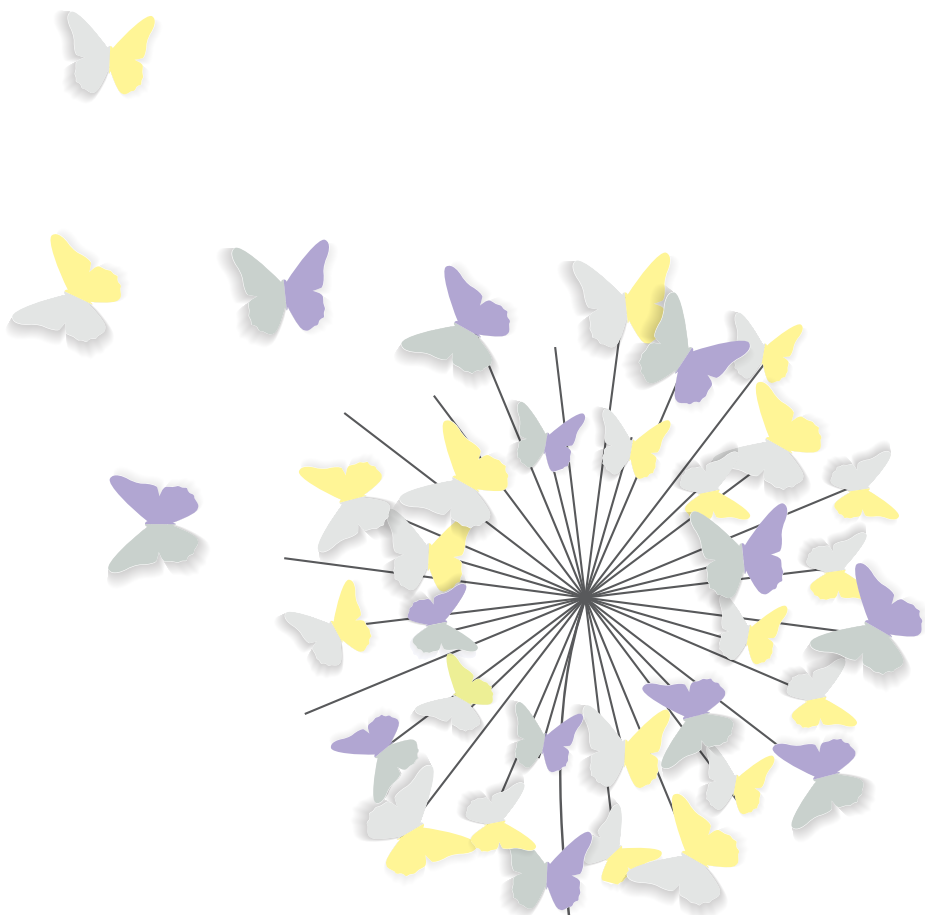
### **Miscarriage Association**

Tel: 01924 200799.

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

### **The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust**

Tel: 0207 7332653. [www.ectopic.org.uk](http://www.ectopic.org.uk)



If you have difficulty understanding this document,  
please contact us on 01983 882288 and we  
will do our best to help you.