

Soon after your child dies

A number of decisions will be made by professionals, including whether a medical certificate stating a cause of death can be issued and if more investigations are needed. In some circumstances, the police will be involved as standard procedure, and this does not mean that you are under suspicion.

A number of people should be told of your child's death, such as your GP, and the coroner if your child died suddenly and unexpectedly. A health care professional will do this.

You should be offered the opportunity to have mementoes, such as photos, a lock of hair, or hand and foot prints from your child. It is fine to ask if these are not offered to you. You should also have the opportunity to spend some time with your child, but there are some situations where this cannot happen or when someone else is required to be present as well.

Organ donation may be a possibility and the doctors should have discussed this with you if it was appropriate. Tissue donation may also be discussed with you.

Your input to the review of your child's death is vital and professionals are expected to discuss this with you.

In most circumstances you should be given time with your child

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

A medical certificate of cause of death can be given by a doctor soon after your child dies, if:

- the cause of death is understood
- the death is from natural causes
- a medical practitioner has been involved in the care of the child, and
- there are no major concerns about the care provided to the child who has died.

Children with a long-term or life-limiting condition

If your child had a long-term illness or life-limiting condition, and their death was anticipated, it is likely that your family and the team supporting you will have made an appropriate 'care plan' together.

It may still be necessary for the coroner to order a post mortem examination. Otherwise, you should be able to register your child's death quickly and proceed with your family's planned funeral and memorial arrangements.

Information on registering your child's death and planning a funeral can be found in part 2.