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ARRANGING A FUNERAL  
FOR YOUR BABY

————— *Your guide* —————



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# Arranging a funeral for your baby



*There are no words for the unfathomable loss felt by any parent upon the death of a baby. It just seems so wrong that a parent should be arranging the funeral of their precious baby. Yet, it's at this time, when you're wrestling with the agony of a broken heart, that you are expected to make practical arrangements for the funeral. You don't have to tackle this alone: we are here to help.*

*Our staff will support you in laying your precious baby to rest. We are dedicated to the highest levels of compassionate care and will look after you and your baby with the utmost respect and dignity. The funeral you choose to have for your baby is entirely up to you and we will do our best to realise your every wish in saying goodbye.*

# Compassionate

## *There is no right or wrong time*

Please don't wait to call us. There is no right or wrong time. We are here to offer guidance and take away worry or doubt at any point.



## *Looking after your baby*

The first thing you'll probably want to know is where your baby will go and who is caring for them. We realise how important having your baby at home with you may be – even for a brief time. Or we can look after them in our funeral home. We will support you whatever your preference.

Sometimes there can be delays, particularly where the death was sudden or unexplained. In this situation your baby may need to stay in, or be taken to, hospital until the medical cause of death has been confirmed. You don't need to wait for medical certification to make plans; you can make arrangements whenever you feel ready.



# care

## *Spending time with your baby*

There's also no right or wrong when it comes to spending time with your baby. Parents frequently tell us that spending time with their baby helps them with the grieving process as making memories is so important. For some, it provides a sense of peace, closure and a chance to say goodbye gently.

If you would like to spend time with your baby, we can arrange this in your home or our funeral home. This is often a very special time and you may wish to read a book, play particular music, bring a favourite toy, drawings, cards or letters to leave with your baby.

## *Dressing your baby*

Despite the loss, you are still able to care for your baby. This may include providing clothes, blankets, toys, jewellery or other familiar items that have meaning. For pre-term babies, we can provide cosy handmade pouches, as even the smallest of clothes may be too harsh on delicate skin. Our experienced team will do whatever is required to make your baby comfortable.

“ *Our experienced team will do whatever is required to care for your baby.* ”

# *Compassionate care*

## *Keepsakes*

You may wish to leave personal items with your baby such as a toy, photographs or other keepsake. If you choose to have a cremation, certain items cannot be cremated and we would return these to you before the funeral. Many hospitals provide keepsake items as part of their support to you.

Where possible, we can arrange prints of your child's hand or foot or a tiny lock of hair for you to keep.

It's so important that you feel able to ask us anything and we encourage questions, no matter what. Your



baby's funeral is unique and you can personalise it in your own special way.

As part of our service we offer you a little keepsake bear. Made by hand and in pairs, one small teddy can be placed with your baby in the coffin, if you wish, and the other is for you to keep.



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## *Arranging the funeral*

For babies, it's common to have a private and personal time to say goodbye. Sometimes this may include family and close friends and it's helpful to know whether you want a religious or non-religious, formal or informal goodbye. We are here to guide you if this is a difficult decision.

To help you decide whether to have a cremation or burial, we've set out the key considerations of each.



## *Registration*

Registration is the formal process required for all babies older than 24 weeks of pregnancy. It is necessary to have done this in order to finalise the funeral arrangements which may have already started as you can contact us at any time you feel ready. The death certificate will be issued by your GP or hospital doctor and we can advise and help you with registration. For babies under 24 weeks, certificates of pregnancy will be provided from the hospital or midwife.



# Considerations for cremation

## 1. Choice of crematorium

If cremation is your preferred option, a very likely consideration will be your baby's ashes. Ashes include everything remaining after the cremation process; your baby, their coffin and any clothing or keepsakes that were placed with your baby before cremation. Ashes can be significant: you can keep them close to you, bury or scatter them at any time, now or in the future – there are options and you can have the space and time to consider what is right for your family.

For babies, the quantities can be very small. In very unusual circumstances, no ash can be returned. For pre-term babies under 24 weeks, where the hospital arranges a shared cremation on your behalf, no ashes will be returned.

In Scotland, there are no cremation fees from a Council crematoria for registered children under the age of 18. Also some private crematoria do not charge for services for under 18s. Your funeral director will guide you when it comes to choosing the most suitable crematorium depending on the number of people attending, location and technical facilities you might need for sound or weblinks.

## 2. Choice of coffin or casket

Having to choose a coffin for your baby just doesn't seem right. We understand this is often a very hard decision so, alongside traditional white wood coffin, we offer alternatives such as wool, willow or wicker and these can come in grey, gold and cream. We can also provide coffins that can feature personal designs, characters or family photographs. A small plate with your baby's name will be attached.



You will be asked to choose a preferred outfit, perhaps a favourite colour. And we will advise what can be laid with your baby in the coffin.

## 3. Collecting Ashes

Typically, ashes are returned to us 2-3 days after the funeral. However, you can take as long as you need to decide what you want to do with them. Once you're ready, you can collect them from us, ask us to deliver them to you or ask for them to be scattered at the crematorium Garden of Rest.

When considering the final resting place for ashes, there are a number of options.

Storage of ashes can be in any receptacle you choose whether this is something you provide or something which we can offer. Options range from traditional urns and caskets to small boxes, bottles or even jewellery.

We can also provide scatter tubes in a variety of different styles and designs for scattering ashes in a place of personal significance.

The ashes' final resting place can provide a meaningful focus for you in years to come. This has the advantage of a specific and permanent place of memorial to visit or lay flowers over the coming years.



# Considerations for burial

## 1. Choice of resting place

If burial is your preferred option you'll need to decide whether there is an existing family grave that is right for your baby, or whether to consider a new lair which other family members can use in time. For new graves, the main decision is which cemetery to choose: a church, council or privately owned cemetery or a woodland burial site. In Scotland, there are no burial fees applicable in Council cemeteries for registered children under the age of 18. Some private cemeteries do not charge for fees related to under 18s.

## 2. Order of events

Most people choose a service first followed by interment but you are free to organise the events in whichever way you prefer. It's also up to you who you invite at each stage and how public or private you wish to make the day.



## 3. Choice of coffin or casket

Having to choose a coffin for your baby just doesn't seem right. We understand this is often a very hard decision so, alongside traditional white wood coffin, we offer alternatives such as wool, willow or wicker and these can come in grey, gold and cream. We can also provide coffins that can feature personal designs, characters or family photographs. A small plate with your baby's name will be attached.



# The service



## 1. Who will lead the ceremony?

The importance of feeling comfortable and using someone who understands you and your family cannot be overstated. Trust and confidence matter and we will guide you in this decision wherever needed and liaise with whoever you feel is most appropriate to lead the ceremony, regardless of what type of service you choose.

## 2. Roles for family and friends

You may wish to include other special people in the ceremony such as close and extended family and friends by asking them to deliver a reading. Readings can also include poems or passages from books as well as religious readings.

## 3. Saying Goodbye

The arrangements we make with you to lay your baby to rest will be unique to what's right for you. Our role includes guiding you on decisions

relating to music, orders of service, flowers and communication of the funeral through social media or other channels. Should you want to invite those close to you to meet up afterwards, we can help with the practical arrangements.

Flowers are not an essential part of a funeral but a time honoured tradition. Your choice may be influenced by the following considerations: are they to be left with the coffin or taken to and from venues or would you like them to be donated to a church or even have family take the tribute away? We can arrange flower orders for you including specific personalised tributes. Or to see the fullest range of possibilities, you may wish to talk to your florist directly. All local florists deliver to us as part of their service.

Music can play a poignant part so you may wish to include it on entering or leaving your venue, or throughout the service. Crematoria have sound systems but only some churches or other venues have suitable equipment or we can arrange for the organist to play softly in the background.

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#### 4. *Transport*

Rather than the formality of a hearse, we typically use a car from our fleet to take you and your baby to their final resting place. Alternatively you may wish to travel with your baby with you in your own car and we can assist you with this as well.

We know how meaningful that last journey can be and will work with you to customise the route as you desire.



#### 5. *Choosing a memorial*

Memorials offer somewhere for parents, other family members and friends to visit; somewhere to lay flowers, cards or other tributes, in days, months and years to come. There are many options available. For burials or ashes interment, you may want to add the baby's name to an existing family stone or you might

prefer to buy a new, bespoke memorial to mark the grave. Other memorial options include planting of trees, plants or bushes in memorial gardens through to creating memory boxes to hold treasured items and keepsakes.

Whatever you choose, we are here to help and guide you, bearing in mind this decision may not be made for some time after the funeral.



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# After the funeral

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## *Paying for the funeral*

At William Purves we do not charge for our professional funeral director services or the vehicle carrying the coffin for children under 16 years old. We do charge for the coffin, any mileage above 30 miles and any other vehicles required. Third party costs such as flowers, printing or purchase of a grave do get charged and form the deposit. We will always provide a full estimate in writing based on the funeral arrangements discussed. Invoices are issued after the funeral and payment is due within 30 days. A full range of payment options are available, or you may wish to pay online at [williampurves.co.uk](http://williampurves.co.uk).

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## *After the Funeral*

Whenever there is a death in the family – even for babies up to a year old - sadly there are other tasks which can be hard to face. However, if you don't advise some of the organisations below that you've experienced a tragic loss, you may continue to receive correspondence which can be distressing.

## *The 'Tell us Once' service*

This is triggered at the registration of death and central and local Government agencies use your National Insurance details and the baby's death certificate to update their records. This is particularly relevant if you are receiving Child Tax Credits, Child Benefit or any other benefit from HMRC. It will also be used for a passport as well as Council Tax.

We've put a small list of typical organisations you may want to contact - if relevant - to help with this process.

### FINANCIAL

- Banks and building societies/premium bonds
- Holiday/family insurance policy provider

### PERSONAL

- Nursery or childcare provider
- GP, hospital, dentist, optician and anyone else providing medical care: NHS or private provider
- Libraries, children's services
- Church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other place of worship

Remember to include your online apps and email subscriptions relating to fertility, pregnancy or parenting. These are often highly personal and you may wish to review your settings.

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## *Lean on our experience*

William Purves has been looking after families in their time of need for generations. When you need us most, please call 0131 447 5858; there will always be someone here for you.

