Help and guidance... after the death of a baby

Little Things & Co.
The baby bereavement charity

Providing emotional and practical support in the worst possible circumstances

In Partnership with

Wolverstans
MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE SPECIALISTS
Little Things and Co. are a Plymouth based registered charity (1165463). Our primary focus is in Plymouth but some of our services also extend nationally.

After the death of a baby it can be a confusing, lonely and frustrating time. At Little Things and Co. our aim is to help with the practical aspect by signposting, items for funerals and literature, to help you find your way through the minefield.

Emotionally we provide Safe Haven- a monthly support group and Little Haven memorial garden.

The loss of a baby or child can be the most devastating event any parent may face. Regardless of the circumstance or baby’s age, the feelings and emotions afterwards can be difficult to process.

The team at Little Things and Co. are dedicated to making sure you receive the support you need, to make sense of your new world.

THE STATISTICS
- 15 babies a day are stillborn or die within 4 weeks of birth in the UK.
- In 2015, one in every 227 babies delivered in the UK was stillborn (that is, the baby died during pregnancy or birth any time from 24 weeks of pregnancy onwards).
- After decades of stagnation, the UK’s stillbirth rate is starting to fall. However it remains higher than other comparable countries and much more can and should be done.
- In 2015, one in every 370 babies born in the UK died in the first 4 weeks of life.
- Contrary to common perception, major congenital anomalies (birth defects) account for fewer than 10% of stillbirths.
- There are well-documented risk factors for stillbirth, such as smoking and obesity. But babies at highest risk are those with poor growth that’s not picked up during pregnancy. These pregnancies are thought to be ‘low risk’ when actually the baby is at risk.
- In around one in three stillbirths the exact reason for the baby’s death is unclear and the death is described as ‘unexplained’. This is because we don’t fully understand the causes of stillbirth. More research is needed.
- One-third of stillborn babies – that’s around 1,200 babies every year – die after a full-term pregnancy (37 or more weeks).
- Every year, 500 babies die from an intrapartum-related event (that is, something that happened during labour). The 2010 West Midlands Confidential Enquiry into Intrapartum Related Deaths found evidence of substandard care in each of the 25 deaths it reviewed. In two-thirds of cases, different management would have reasonably been expected to have made a difference to the outcome.

Statistics according to SANDS, 2018
SAFE HAVEN
Safe Haven is a monthly support group for anyone suffering the loss of a baby or child. The group is an informal meeting for those who have had a baby die at any gestation, due to any circumstance and regardless of time ago.
Held at Harewood House on the second Tuesday of every month. From 6pm. No fees. Refreshments provided.

LITTLE RAINBOWS
Our newest service to help those after the loss of a baby who are now pregnant or have had their rainbow baby. A new baby cannot alleviate the pain of a previous loss and this particular circumstance is often confusing and difficult to process. Little rainbows are online to help and will eventually become another support group in 2019.

BABY LOSS CAMPAIGNS AND AWARENESS PROMOTION
Little Things are active in lots of things to do with baby loss. Our CEO is a regular attendee at the All Party Parliamentary group on baby loss and the team are passionate about change for bereavement care.
We are also part of the 60 charities involved in the official Baby Loss Awareness Week. We host a packed week of events and initiatives.
Check out our social media to find out our recent activities.

STILL LOVED
Still Loved is our initiative to help families who can no longer tend to graves. Sometimes families are unable to attend for either practical or emotional reasons, so we step in and restore a dignified resting place.

CLOTHING
Initially how the charity began, our clothing is modern and suitable for babies of any gestation or circumstance. In various colours and designs even the tiniest of babies can be catered for. Our mission is that no baby goes to their resting place undressed. When a baby dies all choice is removed from their family. With the option to dress their child, parents are handed back some of that control and we believe is fundamental for the healing process.

SUPPORT
If you find yourself in the devastating situation of losing a baby or child, we are truly sorry. We too have been where you are. If there is anything we can do to help, please do not hesitate to get in touch.
Although we have a comprehensive range of services it may be we cannot provide the help you need, if that is the case we have a wide network that we can signpost you to.

CONTACT US
facebook.com/LittleThingsandCo/
Instagram.com//little-things-co
Twitter.com//Little_ThingsCo
info@ltandco.org
MAKING A COMPLAINT OR TAKING LEGAL ACTION

There is no greater loss for families than losing a baby. It may be that nothing could have been done to change what happened; however, sometimes mistakes are made that result in the avoidable loss of your child. Making a complaint or taking legal action can sometimes help parents by ensuring they receive answers, secure an apology, identify any failings, and ensure lessons are learnt to save further unnecessary baby loss.

You might want to ask about compensation and seek advice if you think your child has died as a result of someone else’s fault, particularly in relation to the medical treatment either you or your child received. Appropriate legal advice can help guide you and ensure you understand your options and make the most appropriate decision for you and your loved ones. Medical negligence is a complex area of law, so it is essential that you contact a firm of solicitors with specialist knowledge and expertise.

MAKING A COMPLAINT AGAINST A HOSPITAL TRUST

You may wish to make a complaint regarding the treatment you or your baby received, and you are entitled to do this through the hospital’s formal complaints procedure. It should be that following the unexpected death the hospital has already launched an internal investigation in any event. NHS Choices provides some useful information, and very often the Patient and Liaison Service (PALS) will guide you through the process.

PALS is available in all hospitals and they offer free, confidential advice and support on all health-related matters. A further option may be to seek advice from a third party such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA), or SEaP who offer a Health Complaints Advocacy Service and complaints guidance. Any formal complaint should be directed to the Chief Executive of the Hospital or the Trust, and should request that a reply is received within a specific time frame.

MAKING A COMPLAINT AGAINST A GP OR MIDWIFE

If you feel that your GP or midwife may have made an error in relation to your care or the care of your baby, you will need to ask for a copy of the surgery’s complaints procedure. Keep a record of who you speak or write to, and on what date. If you raise your complaint verbally, make sure you write down everything you discuss.

Included in your formal complaint should be the following:
• What or who you’re complaining about
• What happened and when
• What you’d like to be done to resolve your complaint
• How to contact you

The NHS Constitution says that you have a right to have your GP complaint properly investigated. Your complaint should be acknowledged within three working days, and you should also be told about the outcome of the investigation. To have your complaint investigated, you usually need to complain within 12 months of the event happening, or as soon as you first become aware of the issue you want to complain about. The time limit can be extended in special circumstances.

WHO TO CONTACT FOR SUPPORT WITH A COMPLAINT AGAINST A HOSPITAL OR GP

You can see more at:
• NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/complaints-and-feedback/Pages/nhs-complaints.aspx
• PALS: www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Patient-advice-and-liason-services (PALS)/LocationSearch/363
• SEaP: www.seap.org.uk/services/nhs-complaints-advocacy/
• Healthwatch: www.healthwatch.co.uk/

Should you be unhappy with the outcome of any complaint, you are entitled to escalate this to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

TAKING LEGAL ACTION

If you think that the tragic loss of your baby may have been avoidable, and wish to investigate this further, then it is vital you seek legal advice from a firm who specialise in medical negligence with the view of potentially pursuing a claim for compensation. Medical negligence is a complex area of law, and whilst the aim is not to punish those involved in your care, further investigation could provide you with the answers needed. Whilst it may not necessarily lead to an apology, a change in medical policy could be achieved, and lessons may be learnt in relation to the care afforded to you to ensure the same does not happen again.

If the care fell below a reasonable standard and this resulted in the loss of your baby, legal action may result in a financial settlement to compensate for that damage. Of course, nothing can fill the void of the loss of a baby, but answers can help with the grieving process.

Medical negligence proceedings are complex, but we would encourage seeking advice from a specialist law firm who take an empathetic approach, and who are able to provide you with signposting opportunities to ensure you are fully supported throughout the claims process.

Experience and a good track record are very important, and of course experience within both medical negligence and specifically baby loss cases is essential. You must be confident that you have found someone you trust and can develop a good working relationship with.

If you would like to seek sensitive, free and confidential legal advice in relation to treatment received resulting in the loss of your baby, Wolfertans Solicitors are specialists in medical negligence and at Little Things and Co. we know you would be in the safest hands.
This leaflet has kindly been sponsored by

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Little Things & Co is a registered charity (1165463) who provide emotional and practice support an anyone suffering the loss of a baby. Little Things & Co believes the bereavement care after losing a child should be seamless, thoughtful and helpful.

If you would like to discuss anything you have read within this booklet please do not hesitate to get in touch.

To find out more about the work they do visit www.ltandco.org or email info@ltandco.org