

Healthcare professional contact details

Name:

Department:

Contact telephone number:

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

What happens next?

Information for parents and relatives
who have experienced the sudden and
unexpected death of a loved one

Please fill in healthcare professional contact
details before handing out

This leaflet aims to help you understand what will happen after the death of your baby or child.

The Procurator Fiscal is informed of all sudden and unexpected deaths. The police investigate the circumstances of the death on their behalf. You will be asked a number of questions by the police and health care staff involved. These questions will be asked separately. This may be upsetting but is necessary and important and the information you provide will be valuable. It will be shared with other professionals to avoid you having to repeat your answers.

The police will take some of your baby or child's things (such as bedding) to be examined. In most circumstances you will be able to get these back once a final cause of death is agreed. As a routine task, professionals will check if those with parental responsibility have had any previous involvement with social services.

It is a legal requirement for the Procurator Fiscal to instruct a specialist pathologist to carry out a post-mortem examination to try to agree a cause of death. The first results from this examination will be available within a few days, after which the funeral can usually take place. During the examination samples of tissue and body fluids will be taken for further tests. The results of these further tests should be available within 2-3 months. Some of the samples may be kept as a permanent part of your baby or child's medical information.

Research is an important way of understanding why sudden unexpected infant deaths happen and how they can be prevented in the future. If you would like to, you can give consent for part of these samples to be used for research. Similarly, some of the information you provide may be used to help us understand more about sudden unexpected deaths in infancy. Please be assured that your personal details will never be disclosed.

Many parents and relatives find it helpful to have contact with voluntary organisations that offer support and the chance to meet other families who have had a similar experience. Details of voluntary organisations and other useful information can be found on the "Support for families" section of the SUDI Scotland website:

www.sudiscotland.org.uk/support_for_families/

If you cannot access the internet please ask for this information to be printed for you.

Within the next week you should be contacted by the named healthcare professional whose contact details have been filled in on the next page. They will arrange to meet you to discuss any of your concerns and answer any questions that you have. It may not be possible to discuss post-mortem findings at this early stage.