



The Isle of Wight Rapid Response to an Unexpected Child Death

**Information for parents,
carers and families**

Who carries out the Rapid Response when a child dies unexpectedly?

There is an Isle of Wight Rapid Response procedure which is carried out by a paediatrician and Police officers. They are committed to ensuring that everything possible is done to find out why your child died, and that your family get the support you need at this time. They recognise that the death of a child is deeply distressing and yet important decisions need to be made.

The paediatrician will usually meet you at home with a Police officer. Having a Police officer in your home may be a shock but it is vital that they gather the information needed for all unexpected deaths.

They will, as far as they can, include the family as partners in the investigation, and provide as much information as is possible, both now and in the future.

What meetings do they hold?

Within 48 hours of your child's death the paediatrician will coordinate a meeting so that professionals can share information. Which professionals attend this meeting depends on the age of your child who died and any other children you may have. It could include your GP, midwife, health visitor, school nurse, school teachers and social workers. The purpose of this meeting is to support the investigation and to come up with a plan to offer support to your family. Notes are taken at the meeting so that a record can be made about what was discussed and what decisions were made. The notes will only be shared with the professionals who attended the meeting. All of the information which is shared will be treated with respect and sensitivity, and stored and shared securely.

Can I attend a Rapid Response meeting?

It is not possible for parents or family members to attend this meeting. However a professional will meet you to discuss the support they plan to offer you.

Will there be a post mortem?

It is up to the Coroner to decide if a post mortem is needed. If one is needed it will usually take place within two working days of your child's death. You will be given a chance to see your child and spend some quiet time with them before the post mortem. You will be told what organs or samples have been kept and asked for your views on what should happen to them. When the post mortem is finished, the paediatrician will visit you to explain the findings.

Will there be an inquest?

It is up to the Coroner to decide if an inquest is needed. If the post mortem cannot determine the cause of your child's death, or the death was unnatural, they will hold an inquest, usually in a few month's time. An inquest is a fact-finding process, to find out how, when and where your child died.

You will be invited to take part in the inquest. Further information is available from the Isle of Wight Coroner's Office on 01983 823010. When the inquest is finished, the Coroner will tell the registrar of deaths to issue a death certificate.

When can we hold the funeral?

If the Coroner has decided to hold an inquest they will issue a certificate for cremation or burial. You can then go ahead and hold the funeral.

The Child Death Overview Panel

The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board is required to have a local Child Death Overview Panel, to review the deaths of all children up to the age of 18 who normally live on the Isle of Wight.

The Panel believes that if we can understand better why children die there may be lessons to learn that improve the services offered to children, and we may be able to prevent similar deaths occurring in the future on the Isle of Wight. They may make recommendations to ensure these lessons are learnt. Sadly many child deaths are not preventable, but the Panel needs to consider all deaths to get an overall understanding.

Bereavement Support:

Cruse Bereavement Care (for adults)
0808 808 1677
cruse.org.uk

Child Death Helpline (answered by bereaved parents)
0800 282 986/ 0808 800 6019
childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK (support for families and professionals)
0800 02 888 40
childbereavementuk.org

Childhood Bereavement Network (a hub for those supporting bereaved children)
childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Simon Says (support for bereaved children in Hampshire)
023 8064 7550
simonsays.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends (support for families)
0345 123 2304
tcf.org.uk

Bliss (support after the death of a premature baby)
0808 801 0322
bliss.org.uk

Lullaby Trust (support and advice after the sudden death of an infant)
0808 802 6868
lullabytrust.org.uk

Sands (support for anyone affected by the death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth)
0808 164 3332
uk-sands.org

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